

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-11

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 EA-10 ISO-00 EB-08 AID-05 PM-05
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R 271132Z JUN 78
FM AMEMBASSY COLOMBO
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 696
INFO AMEMBASSY DACCA
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD
AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI
AMEMBASSY KATHMANDU
AMCONSUL HONG KONG
AMEMBASSY TOKYO
USLO PEKING
CINCPAC

C O N F I D E N T I A L COLOMBO 2942

NOFORN

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: XGDS-2
TAGS: CHE, CE, PEBR

SUBJ: JUNE 21-25 VISIT TO SRI LANKA OF PRC VICE PREMIER KENG PIAO

REF: A. COLOMBO 2912 NOTAL; B. COLOMBO 2856 NOTAL

1. FOLLOWING DESCRIPTION OF KENG PIAO DISCUSSIONS WITH GSL
OFFICIALS BASED ON CHARGE CONVERSATIONS WITH PRC AND JAPANESE
EMBOFFS, AND GSL MFA OFFICERS. KENG WAS ALWAYS SPOKESMAN CITED
FOR CHINESE. FOR GSL, PREMIER PREMADASA TOOK LEAD ON BILA-
TERAL SUBJECTS WHILE FONMIN HAMEED HANDLED MULTI-LATERAL MATTERS.
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2. BACKGROUND FOR MEETING

GSL AND PRC VIEW IS THAT KENG'S VISIT WAS APPROPRIATE AT
THIS TIME IN LIGHT OF OTHER HIGH LEVEL PRC FORAYS IN THE REGION.
KENG TECHNICALLY RECIPROCATED GSL TRADE MINISTER ATHULADMUDALI'S
1977 TRIP TO PEKING, WHICH WAS FOLLOWED BY A 1978 DELEGATION
OF SRI LANKAN JOURNALISTS. CHINESE ALSO THOUGHT IT POLITIC

TO EMPHASIZE THAT THERE IS A NEW GOVERNMENT IN PEKING, AS THERE IS IN COLOMBO, AND THAT THERE SHOULD CONTINUE TO BE GOOD RELATIONS BETWEEN THE TWO. THIS MAY BE TAKEN AS AN OBLIQUE APOLOGY FOR PRC COOL ATTITUDE TOWARD PRESIDENT JAYEWARDENE'S UNITED NATIONAL PARTY WHEN IT WAS LAST IN OFFICE IN 1965-70.

2. PRC RELATIONS WITH VIETNAM AND CAMBODIA

CHINESE IN TALKS WITH GSL DESCRIBED PROBLEMS THEY AND CAMBODIANS WERE HAVING WITH SRV IN TERMS IDENTICAL TO THEIR PUBLIC STATEMENTS. THEY DID NOT ASK FOR EXPRESSION OF SUPPORT OR AGREEMENT FROM SRI LANKANS AND NONE WERE OFFERED.

3. PRC - SOVIET RELATIONS

HERE, TOO, CHINESE CONFINED THEMSELVES TO RECITATIONS OF THEIR WELL-KNOWN ATTITUDES ABOUT ANTI-HEGEMONISM AND THE LIKE, WITHOUT ELICITING COMMENTS FROM THEIR HOSTS. THERE WERE NO REFERENCES TO ANY NON-COMMUNIST COUNTRIES IN TALKS, E.G. U.S., JAPAN, KOREA, INDIA, ETC.

4. AFRICA AND THE NON-ALIGNED MOVEMENT

CHINESE MADE VIGOROUS PRESENTATION OF THEIR POSITIONS TOWARD SOVIET ACTIVITIES IN AFRICA, SINGLING OUT CUBA BY NAME FOR CONDEMNATION, AND QUESTIONING ITS NON-ALIGNED CREDENTIALS. FONMIN HAMEED RESPONDED THAT GSL BELIEVES IN "AFRICAN SOLUTIONS, UNDER AFRICAN LEADERSHIP, FOR AFRICAN PROBLEMS." TASK OF GSL AS CHAIRMAN WAS TO MAINTAIN UNITY AND PRINCIPLES OF NAM.
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HOWEVER, GSL WAS CONSIDERING QUESTION, "SHOULD NAM REMAIN ALOOF FROM ARMED CLASHES BETWEEN NAM MEMBERS?", AND EXPECTED THIS TO COME UP AT BELGRADE.

5. BILATERAL TRADE

IN MOST YEARS THE QUARTER CENTURY OLD PRC-GSL RUBBER RICE AGREEMENT RESULTS IN PRC BEING SRI LANKA'S PRINCIPLE TRADING PARTNER. THIS IS SATISFACTORY ARRANGEMENT AFFORDING STABILITY OF SUPPLY AND PRICE TO BOTH SIDES. HOWEVER, WITH INCREASED NATURAL RUBBER PRODUCTION IN CHINA (HAINAN) AND RISING RICE

CROPS IN CEYLON, BOTH SIDES WISH TO BROADEN RANGE OF COMMODITIES TO BE EXCHANGED.

THERE WAS EASY AGREEMENT IN PRINCIPLE TO INCREASE TRADE IN THIS MANNER WITH ACTUAL CONTRACTS TO BE NEGOTIATED AS NEEDED. BOTH SIDES EXPECT COMPOSITION OF TRADE TO CHANGE.

6. ANECDOTES

-- CHINESE ASKED THAT KENG BE AFFORDED FULL HONORS OF STATE VISIT "SINCE VICE PREMIERS REPRESENT THE PRC WHEN ABROAD."
GSL GOOD NATUREDLY ASSENTED.

-- ONLY GSL OFFICIAL HEARD TO GRUMBLE ABOUT VISIT WAS WEATHER BUREAU CHIEF WHO CONFIDED CHINESE CALLED HIM "EVERY HOUR" TO ASK HIM TO GUARANTEE GOOD WEATHER WHEREVER KENG WAS TRAVELING. IN FACT, WEATHER WAS REMARKABLY BRIGHT AND COOL FOR CEYLON MONSOON SEASON.

-- WHEN KENG INVITED PRESIDENT JAYEWARDENE TO VISIT PEKING, PRESIDENT NOTED HE WAS ALSO INVITED TO JAPAN. KENG'S REPLY WAS INTERPRETED BY SOME LISTENERS AS SUGGESTING PRC HAD NO OBJECTION RECEIVING JAYEWARDENE ON VISIT PAIRED WITH JAPAN.

-- GSL POSITIVE ATTITUDE TOWARD PRC INDICATED BY ONE OFFICIAL'S REACTION TO KENG PIAO'S RECORD RUPEE 4,000 DONATION WHEN IN COURSE OF EXTENSIVE SIGHTSEEING HE VISITED FAMOUS KANDY BUDDHIST SHRINE, "TEMPLE OF THE TOOTH". SRI LANKAN OBSERVED, "THAT GOES TO MAKE UP FOR THE BUDDHIST TEMPLES
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DESTROYED IN CHINA".

-- CHINESE RELAXED ATTITUDE ILLUSTRATED BY PRC EMBASSY COMMERCIAL COUNSELLOR WANG PANG-PING'S SMILING RESPONSE TO CHARGE' QUERY AS TO WHAT NEW COMMODITIES LIKELY TO CONTRIBUTE TO EXPANSION OF SINO-SRI LANKAN TRADE. "OH, WE WILL SEND THEM OUR BANANAS FROM CANTON, AND THEY WILL SEND THEIR BANANAS TO CANTON. DON'T WORRY, WE'LL MANAGE TO GET THE TOTALS UP SOMEHOW."

7. FULL PROGRAM INCLUDING DELEGATION LISTS POUCHED NEA/INS MALOTT.
LEVIN

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